



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SOURCES OF SHAKESPEARE'S TEMPEST.¹

AMONG Shakespearian plays the *Tempest* is exceptional, in that no composition has been discovered which could have supplied the poet with the outline of his drama. This deficiency has given birth to a variety of conjectures, set forth with admirable discretion in the *Variorum* edition of Horace Howard Furness. Concerning immediate origins I have nothing to add; but the ultimate source of the story may receive further elucidation.

Among personages of the action, several were evidently modelled after types of the period. In the Boatswain we have an English sea-dog, surrounded by such an atmosphere of salt as to occasion the conjecture that the poet was accustomed to the ocean. For Trinculo and Stephano we need look no further than to Elizabethan vagabonds. To Shakespeare, as to other playwrights, the "still vex'd Bermoothes," whence Ariel brought midnight dew for Prospero's witchery, were islands inhabited by devils. In Pigafetta's account of Magellan's voyage, translated by Eden, the author had read that a certain Setebos or Setebas was the chief demon of Patagonians. These are interwoven threads, which have little to do with the warp and woof of the fabric.

Nor is the scenery more definite. It can only be said that the isle of Prospero should have been situated not far from the track of vessels sailing from Tunis to Naples. Hunter has argued for Lampedusa as having a repute for nocturnal apparitions, and as containing caverns. With too acute a pen, this commentator observes that the island produces pine-trees, and that it was a pine in which Sycorax imprisoned Ariel. Also, Miranda predicts that the logs piled by Ferdinand will weep for having wearied him; this suggests pitch-pine. Such microscopy is irrelevant in the case of a dramatist who provided Bohemia with a seaport. The name of Caliban has been explained as a form of Cannibal, corrupted from Carib; but there is nothing corresponding in the character of the tortoise-like monster.

Abandoning minor traits as furnishing no clue to the inquiry, I may confine myself to the outline of the history. This recites that a prince, who has been driven from his possessions by a rival, remains in a desert, where he dwells with his one daughter, devotes himself to magic arts, and takes in his employ familiar spirits. By the aid of such helpers he makes himself master of his enemy's son, who chances to approach his solitary retreat; this youth is brought

¹ The substance of this article was given in the form of a paper read before the Shakespeare Club of Cambridge, Mass.

into contact with the exile's daughter, and a love affair follows, with happy result ; the banished prince is restored to his dominions. It happens that the same words may be used to summarize a contemporary German drama, the "Fair Sidea" (*Die Schöne Sidea*) of Jacob Ayrer ; the question is, what relation exists between the two works?

The first point to be decided is the relative date of the pieces. Ayrer died at Nuremberg in 1605. The *Tempest* must have been later than 1603, inasmuch as Shakespeare, in making Gonzalo describe an ideal commonwealth, has utilized a passage of Florio's Montaigne, published in that year. The dramatic literature of the period exhibits a gradual surrender of rhyme when intermingled with blank verse ; such seems to have been Shakespeare's own tendency ; judged by this test, critics have been inclined to assign 1610 or 1611 as the date of the play.

In theatrical matters, England was far in advance of Germany, where the drama remained in a very crude condition. From previous centuries between the two countries had existed an intellectual exchange. In 1585 the Earl of Leicester, sent by Elizabeth to the Netherlands, had taken with him a player named Will, who was at one time supposed to have been possibly Shakespeare himself. During Shakespeare's career, English actors continued to perform in Germany, where they gave their pieces both in English and German. It might therefore be guessed that the report of returning Englishmen had given the English writer some idea of Ayrer's comedy ; so thought A. Cohn, who has excellently discussed the position of English actors in Germany. On the other hand, Furness is unable to see any connection between the dramas.

While the themes of *Fair Sidea* and the *Tempest* are so similar as to be expressible in the same words, the details of the action vary. In the German the scene is laid in the forest, in the English on an island. Ayrer brings only the prince into the hands of the enchanter, Shakespeare also the father with his retinue. In the story of the latter, Prospero is consentient to the amour ; in the latter, *Sidea*, placed by her father in charge of the captive, elopes and is pursued. The comic interludes are totally divergent, while Ayrer continues the main narrative beyond the point at which Shakespeare leaves it. These divergencies exclude the supposition that the English poet borrowed from Ayrer, an opinion further contradicted by circumstances hereafter to be noted.

In order that the nature of the connection may be perceived, I will give the scenes of Ayrer's play in which correspondence exists, numbering these successively (without regard to intervening matter). The version is one made by myself, before I had seen the rhymed translation of Cohn.

The action takes place in the ancient heathen time.¹ Ludolf, prince of Littau (Lithuania), has made war on Leudegast, lord of Wiltau (the Wild Vale; a mythical land). Ludolf is defeated, made prisoner, and banished; together with his daughter, the Fair Sidea, he wanders to a forest, where he lives in the hut of a woodcutter. In this strait he has recourse to magical arts, and forms a compact with a devil named Runcival.

I.

A wilderness. Enter LUDOLF, bearing the silver wand of a magician, and accompanied by SIDEA, his daughter.

Lud. What measureless mishap and scorn
Hath fallen on my life forlorn!
I rove bereft of kingly crown,
Control and riches, weal, renown;
Yet though of realm despoiled the while,
I'll strive, by artifice and guile,
Upon my foe revenge to wreak.

Sid. Father, for many a cruel week,
Have I been victim of annoy,
Unsolaced by an hour of joy;
'T were nature, if for sorrow's sake,
Mine heart in thousand pieces break.
I was the daughter of a king;
I am a banished outcast thing.
My plate was piled with dainties sweet;
Now bitter herbs make all my meat.
By throng of suitors was I wooed,
Who here expire in solitude,
Unsure what may the sequel be.

Lud. Ah, hold thy tongue! Jove punish thee!
Have patience; in the circle here
I'll cause my spirit to appear,
And prophesy what life and fate
Till death, us wanderers await,

[He draws with his wand a circle in which he inscribes magic characters.]

Sid. Dost thou intend the sprite to call,
Let me seek safety, first of all,
For he doth cause me dire alarm.

Lud. He shall not do thee any harm.

[LUDOLF taps with his wand the earth inside the circle. Appears RUNCIVAL, a devil, who spits fire, and furiously revolves within the ring.]

Runc. Ludolf, thou art a man unblest,
Who wilt not suffer me to rest,

¹ As apparently does that of the Tempest.

But when thou thinkest any thought,
Wilt have me at thy pleasure brought.
Indeed, I've other things to do
Than all thy fancies to pursue;
Reply, what is thy bidding now?

Lud. Either absolve me from my vow,
Or render knowledge I desire.

Runc. Do not detain me, but inquire;
What is it thou hast mind to know?

Lud. How can I venge me on my foe?

Runc. Whene'er (and it shall happen soon)
Thou prisoner make thy foeman's son,
Use him for servant, and again
After a while of slavish pain
The youth escape, and homeward turn,
Thy happy fortune shall return.
'Tis all that I have power to say.

Lud. If thou perceive, on any day,
A sound of horns within the wild,
Inform me. [Exit RUNCIVAL. To SIDEA.]

Be thou certain, child,
Soon as I make the princely youth
My servant, by his plague and ruth
To uttermost will I requite
His father's enmity and spite.
To peasant lodge let us repair,
Since we may have no better fare.

II.

A forest. LUDOLF. SIDEA.

Lud. My sprite assureth me, that here
The prince will presently appear,
Who hunteth in this wilderness.
I'll capture him, and so oppress,
That few have suffered in like sort.

Sid. Indeed, it were a merry sport.
This single bird in snare to get,
We have the flock within our net.
A heavy ransom must he pay
If he would bear his life away.

Enter ENGELBRECHT, attended by a Servant and shouting.

Eng. So far we've wandered from the track,
That sound or call, there cometh back
No answer. Ha! Who goeth there?
They hasten hither! have a care!

ENGELBRECHT and Servant lay hands on their swords. Enter LUDOLF, holding in the right hand a sword, and in the left a magic wand, accompanied by SIDEA.

Lud. Surrender, prince.

Eng. 'Tis thy mistake ;
No booty hast thou here to take. [To Servant.
Fellow, do bidding of thy lord ;
Stab him.

Serv. I cannot draw my sword ;
It is enchanted, thinketh me.

Eng. 'Tis naught but simple witchery.
Spell-bound am I, I cannot stir.
I needs must be thy prisoner,
And for the nonce thy pleasure do.

Lud. The promise make with temper true. [To Servant.
Begone, or else with main and might
I'll crush thee, upon crow and kite
Bestow thy flesh, and that apace.

Serv. Ay me ! 't was an unhappy chase.
Farewell, I go with sighing heart. [Exit Servant.

Lud. Because thy sire, with lawless hand
Hath sent me forth from house and land
To tarry in this naked wild,
Thou from thine own shalt be exiled,
Must for my daughter carry wood,
And every hest of hers make good.
Unwillingness will she repay
By blows, and if she come and say
Thou 'rt idle, I will beat thee too.

[Strikes the Prince with his wand, as also does
SIDEA.]

[Exeunt.

III.

A forest. Enter ENGELBRECHT poorly clad, bearing an axe, and carrying logs. SIDEA threatens him with her wand.

Sid. Now split the wood ; come, no repose,
Or thou shalt be constrained with blows.
I see, a lazy hound thou art.

[ENGELBRECHT falls at her feet, and lifts both hands
in supplication.

Eng. O me unhappy to the heart !
I have no strength to labor more,
Am tired and aching, o'er and o'er.
Better to perish of despair,
Than such a heavy burden bear.
Kill me, and my distress relieve !

Sid. Although his sire doth sharply grieve
And vex my father, and we both
Have reason to be cross and wroth,
Yet now I mind me of the thing,
He too is offspring of a king,
And never did our peace assault.
He pineth for his father's fault.
So very handsome is his face,
I can't refuse to grant him grace.
Beside, what fun and frolic cheer
Is it to live in desert here,
And be a hermit all one's life?
If he would take me for his wife,
I'd help him in extremity.
I'll go and tell him presently.
My Engelbrecht, what wouldst thou do,
If I, to recompense thy true
And loyal service, should make free,
And for a husband welcome thee?

Eng. No more! I perish of surprise!
'Tis past the power of deities!
If so it prove, of all the rest,
This single day were blithe and blest.
To be your love myself I'd give,
Would serve you long as I may live,
And make you be a crownèd queen.

Sid. The words if thou dost truly mean,
With claspèd hands the vow confirm.

Eng. I promise it with purpose firm. [*They clasp hands.*]

Sid. Art thou mine?

Eng. Yes.

Sid. Then I am thine.

May gods above our friends remain!
Naught else but death divide us twain!
With confidence rely on me;
Where'er thou wilt, I'll follow thee.

[*While the lovers are embracing, appears RUNCIVAL.*]

Run. Sidea, the scheme thou dost propose
I'll shortly to thy sire disclose,
For 't is improper, with his foe
From forth this wilderness to go.

[*SIDEA strikes with her wand the Spirit on the mouth; exit RUNCIVAL, making signs that he is unable to speak.*]

Sid. A wise precaution; in this way
The sprite will not have power to stay
Our parting hence, till safe and sound,
We have escaped my father's ground.

[*Exeunt.*]

These brief passages exhibit the entirety of the relation between the German comedy and farce and the beautiful comedy of Shakespeare. In both the hero is prevented by magic power from using his weapon; yet on this coincidence not much emphasis can be placed, inasmuch as such trait would be likely to appear in any account reciting the capture of a soldier by a magician. The case is different in the duty of handling wood, in both plays performed under the superintendence of the pitying heroine. This detail, taken together with the identity of plot, to my mind appears sufficient for the assumption of a common source.

As regards Ayer there can be no doubt; the Fair Sidea is only a literary version of the most widely diffused and popular of all folk-tales, that in which an unfortunate youth makes in the wilderness the acquaintance of a fairy, over whom he obtains power by seizing the feather robe which enables her to soar, is guided to the house of her gigantic father, where she protects him from the cannibal, is required to perform difficult tasks accomplished through her magic, ultimately elopes with her and is pursued, but again saved by her advice. In the variant followed by Ayer, the prince, on his way to the house of his parents, leaves the lady in the wood, on the pretext that he must seek for her a conveyance, arrives at the court of his father, but there forgets his bride; the latter takes refuge with peasants, and in disguise resorts to the court, where she finds her betrothed about to marry another, but succeeds in recalling herself to his recollection, is restored to his affection, and accepted by his family. This story Ayer has followed with no more deviation than is usual in a literary recast of a folk-tale; the chief originality consists in the introduction of a series of comic interludes unconnected with the central theme. In the play, the cannibal giant of the *märchen* becomes an enchanter who is a banished prince, the final escape is omitted, the tasks reduced to the single duty of wood-cutting; these alterations may already have taken place in Ayer's source; in such case, the history used by him must have been a reworking in which the plot had already been modernized.

Among English versions of the nursery tale, one, collected by myself in Massachusetts, is entitled "Lady Featherflight;" this appellation corresponds to a trait once making the central feature, namely, that the heroine is a bird-maiden, a fairy possessing the power of flight in virtue of possessing a feather robe, who has come into the power of the hero by the appropriation of her garment. The youth, called Jack (there was a time when in English folk-lore John and Jane were considered names especially appropriate to beautiful and distinguished personages), is sent by his poor mother to seek fortune, traverses the forest, arrives at the castle of a cannibal giant

where he is protected by the giant's daughter, is discovered and set to the performance of superhuman tasks (to thatch a barn with feathers, sort out a heap composed of various seeds, weave a rope of sand), flies with the maiden and is pursued by the father, magically creates obstacles which impede the pursuer (a forest, a lake in which the giant destroys himself), leaves his bride in the neighborhood of his father's house, with intent to bring a priest who may marry the couple; the lady, thus abandoned, is in danger from peasants; how closely Ayrrer copied his original may be seen by comparison with the words of the English version: —

"So Featherflight climbed the tree with the thickest branches she could find, and waited there, looking between the leaves into a spring below. Now this spring was used by all the wives of the townspeople to draw water for breakfast. No water was so sweet anywhere else; and early in the morning they all came with pitchers and pails for a gossip, and to draw water for the kettle. The first who came was a carpenter's wife, and as she bent over the spring she saw not herself, but Featherflight's lovely face reflected in the water. She looks at it with astonishment and cries, 'What, I a carpenter's wife, and I so handsome? No, that I won't,' and down she threw the pitcher, and off she went. The next who came was the potter's wife, and as she bent over the clear spring, she saw, not herself, but Featherflight's lovely face reflected in the water. She looks at it with astonishment, and cries, 'What, I a potter's wife, and I so handsome? No, that I won't,' and down she threw the pitcher, and off she went.

"In the same manner the other women of the village come to the well, see the image, mistake it for their own, and depart in search of the brilliant fortune to which their beauty entitles them. The men, who want their breakfast, go in search of their wives, and (not being likely to take Featherflight's face for a reflection of their own features) arrest the girl as a witch, until she is saved by the opportune arrival of the bridegroom, who brings a clergyman. The parson bade them stop, and let Lady Featherflight tell her own story. When she told them how their wives had mistaken her face for theirs, they were silent a moment, and then one and all cried, 'If we have wedded such fools we are well sped,' and turning, walked to the town. The parson married Jack and Lady Featherflight on the spot, and christened them from water of the spring, and then went home with them to the great house that Jack had bought as he passed through the town."¹

In the return of the groom with a priest, and the christening of

¹ "Lady Featherflight," printed in the Proceedings of the congress above mentioned, and reprinted in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vi. 1893, pp. 54-63.

the heroine, the New England tale has preserved an old incident of the narration. As a supernatural being of fairy birth, Feather-flight is unable to tread freely on Christian soil until she has been purified and humanized by the water of baptism. Ayler brings the occurrence within the sphere of daily life ; Engelbrecht leaves Sidea because she is too exhausted to attend him further, and goes in search of a conveyance which may facilitate her journey. Otherwise, as a citation will show, the German has done no more than rhyme the traditional history.

IV.

A grove, and tree over a spring. ENGELBRECHT. SIDEA.

Sid. I hope, we are at last secure.
I have no courage to endure ;
Though life and fortune were at stake,
Another step I could not make.
Ay me ! would I had staid at home !
'T is love hath driven me to roam,
And in this wilderness be marred.

Eng. Ah prithee take it not so hard !
If thou hast footed far and wide,
I 'll find thee means henceforth to ride.
Stay thou behind, while home I wend
And servants with a chariot send,
Who safely shall to court convey.

Sid. From father's side I stole away ;
Be sure, he putteth pains and care
To hunt and follow everywhere ;
My hiding-place if he discover,
For the last time I 've seen my lover,
And by a cruel death must die.

Eng. Now gods that injury deny !
That undetected mayest thou be,
Hide among boughs of yonder tree,
Where he may pass and search in vain.

Sid. Alas, heart-rending is my pain !
I fear, thou wilt forget me there.

Eng. Beloved, listen while I swear ;
In very truth, thy friend I 'll be,
And all my life remember thee.

Sid. I hope, that safe will prove the spot ;
For the last time, forget me not !

Eng. Don't make a fuss about forgetting ;
I 'll send and fetch thee, be not fretting.

[*Exit* ENGELBRECHT.]

Sid. Ah, if deserted by the youth
To whom I 've shown such tender truth,

Mine after days must all be spent
In hopeless sighing and lament.

Enter FINELIA the tanner's wife.

Fin. For yonder in our village poor
There's no good water to procure,
We have to get it from the spring.
My husband bade me go, and bring
A pitcherful without delay.
Since drinking water is not gay,
I'd rather have him purchase beer,
But he's so stingy and severe.

[Perceives the reflection of SIDA's face in the well.

Within the mirror of this brook
I see my likeness. Only look!

*[She throws away her pitcher, dances on the bridge,
and exclaims:—*

I'm sure there is not in the earth
A creature of such perfect worth!
How happened I, thus beautiful,
To take up with a patch so dull?
I'll live no more in such a sort,
But be a lady of the court.

[Throws down her pitcher, and haughtily departs.

*Enter ELA, the miller's wife, and contemplates
the image in the water.*

Ela. I gaze and wonder more and more!
'Tis strange I never knew before
That I was such a pretty thing.
I cannot leave off wondering.
What, stay and be a miller's wife?
No, in the court I'll end my life.

*[She throws down her pail, and departs. All the
women of the village, one after another, come to
the well, and make the same mistake.*

The conclusion may be given in a few words. The tanner, puzzled by his wife's account of her own marvellous beauty, out of curiosity goes to the spring, and finds Sidea, whom he lodges and supplies with peasant apparel. Meantime the prince has reached the house of his father Leudegast, by whom he is well received; as Sidea had foreseen, he forgets his betrothed, and is about to be married to a lady whom his parents have chosen for his bride. At the wedding, Sidea appears in disguise, and offers the bridegroom a goblet containing magical drink, by which his memory is restored. Sidea is accepted as bride of Engelbrecht, and her rival made happy with an-

other, while Ludolf, in quest of his daughter, comes to court during the festivities, is reconciled to his enemy, and recovers his principality.

Ayrer's verse is a good example of the manner in which a traditional story may, without any great expenditure of imagination, be worked into a drama. As for Shakespeare, the connection is more remote. If we consider the universal currency of the *märchen*, it will be credible that the English writer used a version of literary character, in which the plot had been much decorated and abbreviated; that this may have been an Italian novel, in which the scenery and proper names had already been fitted to the country of Naples and Milan, is made likely by the existence of Italian tales in which the material has received literary treatment. Two such appear in the "Pentamerone" of Basile (A. D. 1574). Of these one, entitled "La Palomma" (the Dove) by the name exhibits identity with Lady Featherflight. The hero, a prince named Nardo Aniello, finds in a forest near Naples the beautiful Filadoro (Gold-thread, *i. e.* Fair One with the Golden Locks), daughter of an ogress by whom he is captured; the prince essays to draw and defend himself, but (like Ferdinand) is rooted to the spot. The ogress conveys the youth to her hut, where she imposes on him tasks: "See that you work like a dog, if you had not rather die like a pig! and, for the first service, let this acre of ground be dug and sown as level as this chamber; and let it stick in your brain, that when I come back this evening, if I do not find it done, I will eat you!" She bids her daughter attend to the house, and goes to a meeting of the ogresses; the prince (like Ferdinand) bewails his lot, but is consoled by Filadoro, who assures him that the labor shall be performed by her magic power. The ogress returns, and is surprised to see the work accomplished; the second task is that "six cords of wood, which were in her cellar, shall be split each in four;" this also is done by the enchantments of the heroine. The third obligation is to drain a cistern; seeing the malice of her mother, the girl consents to fly, and the escape is accomplished without difficulty. The hero abandons his bride, the reason assigned being his desire to arrange for her appearance at the court of his father in proper state; he forgets his beloved, and is about to marry the lady of his mother's selection, when La Palomma brings herself to his memory through the song of a dove, and all ends happily.

The debt of Shakespeare to the presumed source is so slight as perhaps scarce to seem worth noting, even although the scaffolding of the *Tempest* was thus supplied; but from the point of view of a comparative student the relation is interesting; the folk-tale, of great

antiquity and world-wide diffusion, has flowered into a number of works which in their respective languages have attained celebrity, and are therefore only less important than the marvellous composition of the English poet.

I have elsewhere shown that the usual European form of "The Bird-wife" is a reduction of the original history in which the narrative made a drama in two acts.¹ The first part recited the manner in which the hero, by seizing her wings, obtained possession of a fairy bride, who at last recovers her plumage and soars to her native heaven; the second act recounted the desolation and quest of the bereaved husband, who wanders the world making inquiries of all creatures, finds one from whom he is able to obtain advice, arrives at the celestial city of the nymph, meets with a cold reception from her divine parent, but by the magic aid of the fairy is able to perform the tasks imposed as a test of worthiness, obtains the bride, but longs for the world of men, takes flight with his wife, and is pursued by the fairy father (who flies as a cloud through the air), by the assistance of his companion is able to interpose magic obstacles, and brings back the mate in triumph.

To the story thus outlined an addition was made; just as in Greek fable the soul that descends to the lower world drinks the water of Lethe and forgets its earthly life, so one returning from the world of spirits might hold his experience a dream; the man who is obliged to abandon his bride because as a fairy she cannot pass the wayside crosses in the daytime which keep demons from the highways, and who therefore goes in advance to devise means of consecration, when he comes into the everyday world and kisses his parents is subject to lapse of memory as regards the mystic region he has quitted; his remembrance is restored only by the song of the fairy herself, who in her bird form succeeds in obtaining admission to his chamber. From its character, as well as from the location of the variants, this expansion may be referred to Christian Europe.

Of the oriental and two-act form of the story an interesting version, recast into literary form, is the tale of Hasan of Bassorah, contained in the Arabian Nights. More pleasing, but fragmentary, is a relation contained in the Thibetan Kandjur; how the author utilized the opportunities of the folk-tale may be shown by the complaint of the forsaken lover, Sudhana, as he asks of all creatures the whereabouts of his beloved: "Full moon, thou sovereign of stars and illuminator of the dark, thou dear to the eye of Rohinī, fair guide, hast thou seen the home of my love, the lotus-eyed Manohara?" Advancing further, mindful of lost joy, he espied a doe, and to her he

¹ *International Folk-lore Congress, 1891. Papers and Transactions.* London, 1892, pp. 40-64.

said : 'Oh doe, thou who delightest in grass and flowers, wanderest in quiet and peace, no hunter am I, tell me, hast not beheld the roe-eyed slender Manohara?' Proceeding to another spot, where he marked a bee search the depth of a sanctuary adorned with flower and fruit, he cried : 'Bee, dark as the mountains blue, dweller among reed and lotus, perchance hast thou viewed my Manohara with her bee-dark tresses?' . . . In such wise with troubled sense came he to the cell of a hermit he sweetly revered, and said : 'Thou through patience sublime, who for thy robe wearest bark of the tree and fell of the beast, thee I worship ; tell me quickly, my Manohara hast thou known?' The hermit answered, 'Be welcome.' It proves that with the hermit Manohara has left her ring and directions for the journey ; the hero, through the aid of the holy man, obtains objects necessary for success, and proceeds to the land of the Kinnari (the fairy race to which the Bird-wife belongs) ; at the time of his advent the returned nymph is about to bathe in order to cleanse herself from the odor acquired among mankind ; her women are drawing pails of water for the ablution ; in one of these Sudhana casts the ring of his beloved, obtained through the hermit ; when the pail is poured out the ring falls on Manohara, who recognizes the token, seeks the youth who had been her husband, and conducts him to her father. If the guest be a man the fairy-king threatens to cut him in pieces, but gives him an opportunity of proving higher rank by the performance of certain tasks, of which the first is to cut down trees with his sword (it is the same duty of which we have a survival in the duty of wood-cutting or wood-bearing required by Ayler and Shakespeare). The Buddhist author explains the success of the hero in virtue of his magic ability as a future Buddha. In the end the human husband has a desire to revisit the land of men, whither he is carried through the air by the Kinnari (apparently a bird-folk). The lost son is welcomed with delight by the king, his father, who abdicates in his favor ; the lovers remain to lead a happy life in the city of Hastinapura. The narrator was the best possible authority, since in a former life he had been the very Sudhana whose adventures are commemorated. The narrative, with many beauties, has the oriental faults of exuberance and prolixity.¹

Of tasks imposed on the hero, Shakespeare and Ayler retain only the disposal of a great quantity of wood. Basile makes this the second duty, the first requirement being to plough and sow an untilled piece of land. Comparative examination warrants the conclusion that the latter is the primal form ; in order to make a meadow the youth must clear the wilderness ; this involves the chopping down of

¹ A. Schiefner, "Awarische Texte," in *Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences*, St. Petersburg, vii^e Ser., xix. 1873, p. xxvi. ff.

trees, which, after the manner of woodcutters, he may subsequently be ordered to pile up in cords. Again, according to some variants, in course of bringing the desert to order, the guest must level a mountain; in others he must also drain a lake. This last requirement, with slight modification, becomes the emptying of a cistern (which makes the third day's work in the tale of Basile); so that this demand, too, is merely repetitive, and incidental to the cultivation, between sunrise and sunset, of a rough field. But once more, the latter form does not make the whole of the task; in many versions it is further necessary that the seed should spring up, ripen, and be harvested before evening, and this feature seems original in the incident.

That such was the fundamental idea is enforced by the form given to the task in its earliest record, namely, in the Argonautic myth. Apollodoros relates that the hero was charged with the recovery of the golden fleece belonging to the ram which had rescued Phrixos, child of the Sun, when threatened with death as a sacrificial victim; Phrixos, arrived in the isle of Aia, had offered up the ram, whose fleece was suspended in the grove of Ares. Jason, accompanied by two sons of Phrixos, arrives at Aia, and makes suit before Aiētēs, himself of the solar race and master of the isle. The stern king (iii. 404-421) listens to the plea, and declares his willingness to bestow the prize on the stranger, if the latter can attest divine quality, by doing the husbandry which the host himself is able to perform.

Stranger, there is no need so fully to set forth thy title;
Race of the gods if ye are, arrived as far as mine island,
Worthy no less than myself, the fleece I will give thee to carry,
When thou hast proven thy merit; I grudge not to men who are valiant,
Such as thou sayest is he who hath the sceptre of Hellas.
Yet first accomplish a work, a trial of thy virtue and daring,
Task I myself undergo, although the labor be hardship.
Bulls brazen-footed are mine, who fire exhale from their nostrils,
Twain, whom I yoke and drive, to break the four-acred fallow.
'T is not the seed of the wheat I cast in the meadow of Ares,
But germs that leap toward the light, teeth of the terrible dragon,
Which grow into armed men; as soon as the soldiers have sprouted,
All I destroy with my spear, as one after other I smite them.
At morning are yoked the bulls, at eve I repose from the mowing;
Only do thou the like, and part toward thy home with the treasure.
Else have no hope; I count it always disgraceful,
If one who is nobly born cede to a man who is baser.

Jason essays the enterprise, which he accomplishes through the efficacy of a magic salve lent by Medea, daughter of Aiētēs, who at first sight has fallen in love with the guest. The fleece ought now to be delivered; but Aiētēs, despite his high-sounding phrases, has no idea of keeping his promise. Knowing that her father medi-

tates treason, Medea persuades Jason to fly, taking the fleece and herself. A pursuit follows, led by Absyrtos, son of Aiētēs; through the connivance of Medea, her brother is slain by Jason, in an ambush to which the youth has been attracted.

Another version makes the heroine herself slay her brother and scatter the fragments of the boy's body, in order that the king her father may be detained from pursuit in virtue of the necessity (according to Greek ideas) of providing decent burial for the remains of a son.

In the account of Apollodoros, the task assigned as test of equality is obviously altered. Jason is required to sow the teeth of a dragon; this feature is exotic to the myth, being borrowed from the similar fable of Kadmos. Again, the fiery bulls are said to be the work of the divine smith Hephaistos; in the nature of the case, metallic quality must be a late addition; originally, the animals would have had such heat as properly belongs to cattle of the Sun. Aia is the isle in the eastern seas which contains the Sun-house, whence the bearer of the orb every morning starts on his journey, and to which he returns for nocturnal repose, before beginning the course of the following day. In the solar paradise vegetation naturally has a rapid growth; among deities a day is equal to a year of mortals; the Sun-god breaks the fallow land, just as any farmer is in the habit of doing, save that his labor is more efficient; he asks of the guest only the accomplishment of such toil as he himself easily performs. Time passed, and geography expanded; the Black Sea was explored by early navigators, and the wanderings of the Argonauts traced according to notions of imperfect correctness; the theme became unintelligible, and from a saga was turned into a tale which derived interest from extravagance; hence a tendency to borrow and ornament. The idea had once been, that an adventurous mortal, himself of divine descent, should arrive at the habitation of his ancestor the Sun, prove his kinship, and return laden with robes and skins possessing a brightness natural in the solar isle; the myth, which had answered to similar narrations of American Indians, came to be turned into poetry, and refracted into fanciful variations.

The second task of the New England tale is to sort a confused heap of seeds, and the labor is performed by ants called forth by the heroine. Identical is the incident as narrated in the Sanscrit version of the "Katha Sarit Sagara." On the first day the guest must yoke bulls, break up and sow the untilled ground; on the second it is necessary that the seed should be regathered. The duty, therefore, appears to be only a repetition and outgrowth of a work similar to that of Jason, as already expounded. It is likely that Somadeva followed pre-Christian Hindu sources; his variant may therefore

antedate the time of Apuleius, who writing in the second century gives the very same trait, that of sorting mingled seeds and its performance by ants, as an element in the adventures of Psyche.

According to the Latin writer, the history of Cupid and Psyche is founded on a nursery tale (*anilis fabula*), of which the outlines are visible in the reworked composition; this story has an intimate relation with the Bird-wife; here also a human being is visited by a winged deity, is ultimately forsaken, yet receives an intimation to follow the fugitive lover; the bereaved mate goes out on a quest, wanders the world, asks information at successive homes, and finally arrives at the distant residence of the beloved, where it is coldly received by a stern parent, is set to the performance of tasks imposed in order to test the worthiness of the suitor, performs them with the aid of its divine friend, and is finally successful. (The flight, which should have ended the story, has been eliminated.)

In the version given by Apuleius the *märchen* becomes a philosophical, or rather a religious, allegory; the abandoned lover, who seeks and recovers his fugitive mate, is the Human Soul (Psyche), the bride of Celestial Love (Cupid). The Soul, unsatisfied with allurements of the world, is cast out from earthly joy, and exposed in the wilderness, but there taken up by divine agency (Zephyr; "Prevenient Grace") and wafted to the palace (of Meditation), where it is visited by Love, who grants no more than a mystic glimpse of his ideal beauty; contrary to express prohibition, it attempts to sensualize the image, and becomes subject to Passion (Venus), and therefore loses the vision; in despair, it starts on a quest (a "Pilgrim's Progress"), and reaches mansions in which it vainly hopes for refuge, namely, the houses of Industry (Ceres) and Family Affection (Juno); it is sought by Passion, which attempts to reclaim its fugitive slave, but escapes, and arrives at the city of its desire; before the threshold it is arrested by Habit (Consuetudo), and handed over to its tyrant Passion, by whose command it is tormented with Anxiety (Sollicitudo) and Sorrow (Tristities); it is required by works to prove the worth which may justify union with a deity, performs tasks in the execution of which it must descend even to Hell (Tartarus), by the aid of its divine friend succeeds in the toil, yet is still refused its desire, and only through an act of Heavenly Grace (Jupiter) is itself made immortal, and in equal marriage united to that Immortal Love which has ever been the object of its aspiration and through future eternity will be its mate, and gives birth to its child Happiness (Voluptas).

Comparing the outline with that of the Bird-wife, it becomes apparent that the story is not merely similar, but of common genesis. The chief divergence, the change in the sex of the suitor, is a transition

not uncommon in folk-tales. Resemblances are not only material, but verbal; the history of Psyche may therefore be accounted a variant, which has indeed developed into a distant narration, but nevertheless has an identical root.¹

The work cannot have originated with Apuleius, who usually shows a sensualism quite incompatible with the spirit of the allegory. As in other cases, he must have been only a translator; the composition must be assigned to an unknown Greek of a period considerably earlier. The parents of Psyche are made to consult the oracle of the Milesian Apollo; such localization further indicates a Hellenic source. There can be no error in the assumption that the Cupid of the Latin author is the Eros of an unknown Platonist, whose purity and depth of sentiment were in complete contrast to the rhetorician of Carthage. Yet Apuleius has been able to preserve the theme of a beautiful and passionate creation, animated by a religious emotion which in this case owed nothing to Christianity, but which we are apt to suppose possible only to the higher forms of Christian belief.²

The Latin story proves that by the time of our era there existed a body of folk-tales, recited not merely with correspondence of outline, but also with verbal agreement from India to Greece (doubtless also from Japan to Gaul). Among these some have prolonged their existence, and through the two intervening millenniums have continued to obtain currency through the three continents of the Old World, and

¹ Apuleius makes an ant, touched with pity, summon his fellows to gather the scattered seeds. Venus recognizes the hand of her son, and tells Psyche: "It is no doing of yours, but of him whom to mutual harm you have fascinated." So in the New England tale the giant addresses the hero: "This is not your doing." Except in sex, the action verbally corresponds.

In a Russian story of the type, Afanasief, *Skazki*, viii. 1, Fenist the Bright Falcon secretly visits the heroine, is wounded by knives placed in the window by her two jealous sisters, takes flight, but pauses on his way to bid the bride follow, arrives successively at the abodes of two old women, from whom she obtains direction and magical objects, and ultimately finds and wins her lost husband. Ceres and Juno of Apuleius seem to correspond to these old women.

Cupid, when Venus is obdurate, flies to implore Jupiter; the trait may contain a reminiscence of a "Magic Flight," which naturally would have once belonged to the *märchen*.

² Among traits of the Cupid and Psyche, some are adaptations of traditional tale-elements, others invented on the basis of the allegory. The latter relation is shown in the incident that Psyche is pursued by Venus as a fugitive slave. T. Taylor, translator (*Metamorphosis*, London, 1822), aptly cites a passage from the work of Synesius (fifth century) on Dreams; this author says that when the soul has once been fascinated by corporeal good she may be compared to a free workman who, out of passion for a slave of his employer, has signed away his liberty, and is liable to be reclaimed if he escape. Synesius makes the tyrant of the soul to be *θυλν*, matter; the idea is ethical rather than metaphysical; Venus (Aphrodite) is Sensual Love, earthly desire in all forms; I have represented the name by Passion.

also penetrated America (perhaps by both the European and Asiatic routes) ; these have constantly undergone fresh changes, been subject to retrenchments and additions, assumed later forms which in their turn have attained the widest diffusion, yet through all alterations so far retained identity as still to be recognizable. In the case of one element of the tale, the tasks laid on the quester, we have seen that the narration does not appear to have possessed a remotely prehistoric character, but on the contrary exhibits tokens of such modification as show the complex history of which it makes part to have been produced in a period relatively recent, and in a civilization already far from savage ideas.

This thesis will be confirmed and illustrated by examination of a kindred history of identical root but separate evolution, namely, the myth of Urvāṇi, as recounted in Hindu literature.

Urvāṇi belongs to a class of nymphs known as Apsarases. The name in a general way answers to the European fairy ; an Apsaras inhabits great trees of the forest, is encountered beside streams and lakes, but also has a remote residence in a fairyland often represented as in the sky. Such beings are skilled in magic, can assume many forms, and swiftly traverse the air ; as with our fairy their beauty is proverbial. They are of amorous disposition, and inclined to alliances with mankind ; but these are of a temporary nature ; the Apsaras, being immortal, cannot permanently unite herself with a man ; again, they are averse to the ties of family life, and recognize no law save inclination. The children whom they bear to men, with that painless gestation proper to deities, they heartlessly expose to perish or be brought up by others. Yet they have mates, called Gandharvas, often represented as winged, with whom they reside, and, it would seem, lead the ordinary tribal life ; so that it is only as related to men that such inconstancy is manifest. In the Mahabharata they are frequently represented as agents employed by Indra to seduce holy men whose asceticism promises to make them dangerous to the gods. As the result of a curse or endurance of a penalty they often remain for a season in animal form (for example, as crocodile or doe), until they have become the mother of a saint, and at last are set free from their enchantment. The palaces which they inhabit with their divine companions possess a splendor in all respects answering to elfin abodes. Their ethical imperfections may in part be only the survival of early human habits ; but their character as divine dancers seems to have been elaborated after the example of minstrels who surrounded Hindu princes.¹ The Gandharva retained more of his ancient importance, since he remained an object

¹ See A. Holtzmann, "Die Apsaras nach dem Mahabharata," in *Zeitschrift der D. Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxxiii. 1879, 631 ff.

of worship, and was supposed to be present in the act of generation.

The account as given in the Çarapatha Brahmana of the Yagur-Veda has become known to English readers especially through the citation of F. Max Müller. Urvāṣi, we are told, had accepted the mortal Purūravas under certain conditions, namely, that he should not embrace her against her will, and should not display to her his unclothed person (a similar prohibition has already been noted in the tale of Psyche). After a time, her mates the Gandharvas think it desirable to recover their companion, and with that object devise a stratagem by which the pact may be violated (it seems to be understood that the wife is consentient to the plot which is intended to free her from her promise). Urvāṣi keeps two pet lambs, which are tied to the bed; these the Gandharvas steal, while Urvāṣi shrieks that she is being robbed, and casts reflections on the manliness of the husband who allows it. Purūravas leaps up in haste, and has no time to don his princely robes; the Gandharvas send a flash of lightning, which illumines the darkness, and discloses the form of the man; accordingly, the conditions being violated, Urvāṣi deserts her mate and vanishes, but as she does so promises a future meeting. Acting on the hint, the forsaken prince goes in quest, and in the course of his wanderings arrives at an outlying lake where he finds nymphs bathing in the form of swans, among whom he recognizes his former wife. He implores her to return; this she refuses to do, but promises to bear him a son. Purūravas continues his search, and at the end of the year arrives at a golden palace (the fairy-hall of the Gandharvas). He is admitted, and Urvāṣi sent to him; the fruit of the meeting is the promised heir. The hero is allowed to demand of the Gandharvas any boon he desires, and at the advice of Urvāṣi, requests to be made a Gandharva. This is accomplished by means of a fire-sacrifice, made with fire-sticks after the proper ritual, for the performance of which are given minute directions. Purūravas thus becomes immortal (and is united to the nymph).

Other authors repeat the tale with fantastic additions. According to a commentator on the history of the Rig-Veda, Urvāṣi, in consequence of a fault, has been banished to earth by the gods Mitra and Varuna. The same writer makes Purūravas to have been supernaturally born from his own father, who in consequence of trespassing on the forbidding grove of the goddess Durga had been turned into a woman. In the "Kathā Sarit Sāgara," the hero loses his wife through the effect of a curse pronounced by a hermit whom his boasting has offended; through penitence Purūravas obtains the favor of

Vishnu, who acts as mediator ; Urvaçi is restored, and the couple lead a happy life on earth.¹

In dramatizing the myth Kalidasa used great freedom. Purūravas, an ally of gods against demons, has an opportunity of rescuing Urvaçi from a demonic captor, and succeeds in accomplishing his task before the advent of the Gandharva king whom Indra has sent to liberate the Apsaras. Finding that the nymph is already free, the Gandharva proceeds to convey her skyward in his celestial chariot ; meantime the fairy, who has fallen in love with her rescuer, contrives to leave a lace of her garment dangling in a vine. Using this pretext, on the morrow she descends to earth ; wrapt in a cloud, she approaches Purūravas, and throws him a letter containing a declaration of love. By the reception of the note she is able to satisfy herself that her passion is returned, and reveals herself. A complication arises ; the queen of Purūravas picks up the letter, incautiously left about, reads it, and perceives that she has a rival. However, the lady proves merciful ; like a good woman (according to Hindu ideas), whose first consideration is the happiness of her husband, she declares her intention to recede, and devote herself to a religious life. As there is now nothing in the way of their union, the lovers resort to the forest in order (so to speak) to pass the honeymoon ; but Urvaçi is unfortunate enough to enter a sacred grove prohibited to women, and in consequence is metamorphosed into a liana vine. Her bereaved lover is inconsolable, sets out on a quest, wanders through the world, and makes inquiries of all creatures, until at last he stumbles on the ruby of reunion, in virtue of which he finds the liana and retransforms the lady. Now must be supposed an interval of many happy years ; at the end of this time, the amulet on which depends the union of the pair is stolen by a vulture. The bird happens to fly over a hermitage, and is shot by a youth attached to the sanctuary, who in consequence of such violation of rule is dismissed by the sage ; this young man is none other than Ayu, the son whom Urvaçi, without the knowledge of her husband, has brought forth and consigned to the education of the hermit. Ayu arrives at court, brings the gem, and is recognized. As between immortal and mortal, a perfect union is apparently impossible ; but the god Indra needs an ally in an approaching war with demons ; in order to obtain the help of Purūravas, the divine messenger is sent to announce that the latter may retain Urvaçi for life. Narada declares that the hero will be granted any boon he may ask, and Purūravas wishes that wisdom may be added to his felicity.

In these later stories, we perceive that the tale has received a

¹ The literature is given by K. F. Geldner, *Purūravas und Urvaçi*, in Pischel and Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, Stuttgart, 1889, vol. i. p. 243 ff.

happy ending. Quite different is the Vedic hymn. Far from being simple and direct, as might be expected of an early production, the lay is complicated and obscure ; a sophisticated poet has been pleased to set forth simple ideas in language so metaphorical as to be nearly unintelligible. The verse recites a dialogue between the pair, after the fairy has left her husband, who goes forth in quest, and finds her at a lake, where she is bathing with other nymphs, who have cast aside their robes for the purpose. From the stanzas it appears that the hero has made an unsuccessful attempt to lay hands on his former mate. Purūravas begs Urvaçi to stay her flight and listen ; she bids him desist from fruitless entreaty. He laments her unkindness ; she replies that during the four years in which she had lived with him in other form on earth he had exercised no moderation, and remained deaf to her warnings. It is against her will that she has conceived a child, whom she will bring forth and leave to be reared by daughters of the gods and rivers, sure to cherish the babe for the sake of its father's fame as slayer of demons. He urges that this future son will sigh for his absent father ; she promises that she will send the boy (when adult) to visit his sire. He threatens suicide, and she remains unmoved, cynically assuring her lover that no woman is worth taking so seriously. He makes a final appeal, but she responds that between mortal and immortal can be no permanent union ; enough that he shall have an heir, the parent of a line which will recognize him as ancestor, and through the virtue of whose sacrifices he will be happy in the heaven of Indra. The hymn breaks off, leaving the hearer to imagine the disappearance of the nymph.

The poem contains much that is enigmatical. We are not told that Urvaçi is a bird-maiden, but it seems likely that the Vedic author so conceived the situation ; in mentioning nymphs who had left their garments by the lake-side, he can hardly have intended anything except feather robes. The hero apparently has made an attempt to grasp the fairy, but failed ; she obtains her wings and soars upward, arrayed in the glories of many-colored plumage ; in her flight she pauses in the air to converse with her suitor. Again the corresponding account of the folk-tale justifies the supposition that the remote lake is the same as that in which the Apsaras had originally been captured by the usual expedient of taking her robe (as is the case with Manohara). The lay describes her as having remained on earth for four years in a different form ; as she speaks in her bird shape, the reference may be to the human form which she wore until she succeeded in recovering her pinions and departed to her distant fairy-land, from which, after an interval, she has again returned to the water which on certain occasions she is in the habit of haunting.

With regard to the relation between the Vedic poem and the later prose versions, different opinions have been enunciated. The common view has been that the author of the lay used the same myth which is more fully recounted in the Brahmana; the other, that the prose is the work of a scholiast who knew only so much as is recounted in the poem, but by the aid of free imagination undertook to restore the narrative which he supposed to have been in the mind of the poet.¹ Analogy supports the latter view; it is in the usual course that ballads are remembered and the sagas which they versify forgotten. Such theory is confirmed by the relation of the compositions; the prose seems to misinterpret the verse. The poet, in metaphorical speech, having reference to the scene at the pond, makes the hero complain that the fairy has vanished like a flash of lightning (*i. e.* has soared up in the gleaming splendor of her many-colored feather robe), while her companions shrieked like frightened lambs; the commentator took it for granted that the allusion was to the departure of Urvaçi from her husband's house, and on this basis invented the scene regarding the two lambs and the flash of lightning sent by the Gandharvas. His idea, that the nymph had established conditions which the hero violated, may in itself be ancient, but cannot have been the idea of the poet, inasmuch as the latter represents Urvaçi as formerly subject to marriage by capture, as weary of earthly life and the restraints of wifehood, and therefore prepared to escape on the first opportunity. In the same way Kalidasa obtained from the lay an idea which he used as the basis of a reconstruction; Urvaçi says that the gods had made Purūravas a slayer of Asuras or evil demons (dragons or other monsters); the dramatist improved the hint into a story that the hero was an ally of Indra, that he obtained the love of the nymph by rescuing her from a demon, and owed his final happiness to the need which gods had of his amity and armed help. Adopting this view, we have an example of the general rule, according to which later stories arise from a fanciful reconstruction of celebrated older compositions whose incompleteness excites curiosity. So we seem to trace the process in virtue of which the legend was turned into an imaginative history closely resembling the *märchen* under examination.

The tale of Purūravas must in the first instance have been a legend belonging to a particular clan which chose to refer its origin to an immortal mother. As with all such narratives the value of the story consisted in the worth of the divine ancestress, who was expected to succor her descendants and be present at their need. Such assistance could not be expected of a woman subject to painful childbirth,

¹ H. Oldenberg, *Zeitschrift der D. Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxxix. 1885, p. 75.

family toil, and bodily death. For the sake of the race it was necessary that the goddess should return to her native heaven, free from mortal ties other than those of memory; the male ancestor had his sufficient part in the establishment of a line which would preserve his name, and pay that honor on which, according to ancient ideas, depended his rank and happiness in the spirit-world.

Conditions altered with time; the story came to be universally popular with folk no longer interested in the welfare of a clan; advance of culture, increasing security of life, development of marriage into a more permanent relation, required a story which should satisfy, not merely the pride of a family, but the heart of a man; hence a succession of changes productive of qualities correspondent to the new demand.¹

Such improvement was accomplished by addition of features in themselves ancient, but foreign to the particular narrative, in which their exotic quality is indicated by incompatibility with the original idea of the tale. The *märchen* of the Bird-wife was formed, when to a gentile saga which recounted the origin of a tribe was added a section which set forth the recovery of the lost mate. Probably before our era the narration so constructed had attained excessive length; for the sake of simplicity the two acts were reduced to one, a contraction first appearing in the collection of Somaveda. In return the narrative continued to receive additions more and more fanciful. Save in the single respect of oral transmission, the method of development in no respect differed from that of written fiction as exemplified in the case of the Vedic myth; we everywhere perceive the same invention, self-consciousness, and artistic intent.

As to date, we have seen reason to believe that the tale did not exist in Vedic or Homeric time. Subsequently there grew up numerous independent forms of similar legends; no doubt also (as the story of Psyche leads us to suppose) there may have been a whole class of corresponding novelettes. Among these histories a single one, that of the Bird-wife, prevailed over its kindred, according to the usual law extinguished less attractive forms, and became the focus of new variation. As a matter of course, the novel must have emanated from a single geographical centre; equally of course, its birthplace must have been in a civilized region. The particular country there is nothing to determine; conjecturally, one might guess India, whence it has emigrated as far as Madagascar.

It is not to be supposed that the progress of this one story constitutes a norm for all *märchen*; every human composition has its own separate history; folk-tales, like writings, are of all sorts; it is no

¹ The relation between sagas and *märchen* is excellently set forth in the chapters of E. S. Hartland, *Science of Fairy Tales*, pp. 255-332.

more possible to lay down a formula of origin for oral literature than for written.

Above all other traditional narratives the Bird-wife makes an interesting chapter in the relations of traditional and recorded fiction. The numerous recasts to which in many lands the tale has been subject offer every degree of freedom, from the elegant adaptation of Basile to the liberty of Burmese and German drama, from the pious allegory of an unknown Greek to the beautiful comedy of Shakespeare. With the English poet, the *märchen*, received through literary mediation and pared to the vanishing point, served merely as a peg on which to hang golden fruit. These developments did not affect the popular narration, which to the present day has maintained independent existence. The usual law is exhibited, according to which oral literature easily passes into writing, but written compositions only with difficulty descend and find acceptance on the lips of the people.

The nymph who pities and succors her mortal lover figures in many imaginative works, and in each assumes different qualities and characters. As respects origin, only second cousins are the tender Psyche and the haughty Medea ; but sisters, or sisters once removed (to use Russian phrase), are personages of folk-tale or of literature, Featherflight, La Palomma, Rupasikha, Manohara, Sidea, Miranda. Among these like a star apart shines Shakespeare's heroine :

You, O you,
So perfect, and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best.

W. W. Newell.